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# INTEMPERANCE.

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EXTRACTS

FROM

PIKE'S HISTORY OF CRIME.

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1877.

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# INTEMPERANCE.

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## DRUNKENNESS OF THE PRIMITIVE TRIBES-MAN.

HIS ideas of life, virtue, and happiness were simple. To fight an enemy and carry off plunder, to make himself drunk when the battle was over, to remain drunk so long as the spoils afforded him the means, and then to fight and drink again—these were the objects of existence, and to attain them in perfection was to be a good man and true.—Vol. i, p. 73.

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## EARLY ATTEMPTS TO CHECK DRUNKENNESS.

The reign of James I was remarkable for some legislation on matters which have no small interest for the present generation. James, to his honour be it said, was anxious that his subjects should not be drunkards, and that they should enjoy such recreation as he rightly or wrongly considered innocent. Ale-houses had been the subject of an Act in the reign of Edward VI. This was commonly known as the Act touching the keepers of tippling-houses, and offences under it may be found without difficulty on subsequent rolls. In the first year of James's reign, and at intervals of no great length afterwards, new Acts were passed with the object of checking drunkenness; and in one of these it is recited that the reformation desired in the reign of Edward VI had not been effected. A history written solely from the preambles of statutes would carry us back to the golden age, of which, however, no records have been preserved. But if we discard these summaries of history, written (as some other histories of ancient times are) from the imagination, we still have left to us the indisputable fact that drunkenness was considered very prevalent during a century preceding the Commonwealth, and that it attracted the notice of the government. The conclusion to be drawn is not that drunkenness had been increasing, but that men were becoming civilised enough to ask themselves whether something could not be done to keep their fellows sober.

All the restrictions upon tippling-houses had the approval of the Puritans, but the encouragement given by James to various sports and pastimes was by no means so well received. . . . He wrote a treatise in favour of permitting sports and pastimes on Sundays after the hours

of divine service, and required the clergy to read it in their churches. Much animosity was excited by this dictation in a matter upon which many persons were excessively sensitive. A bill for the better observance of the Lord's day was not long afterwards introduced, and at length passed, which was, in principle, altogether opposed to James's book. James's successor, Charles, was nevertheless so ill-advised as to republish this controversial work, which had, no doubt, been written with the best intentions, and perhaps founded on sound principles, but had gradually become associated with the ideas of tyranny and immorality. . . . Thus the honest efforts of the first two Stuart kings of England to solve a very difficult social problem, not only were unsuccessful, but may perhaps have contributed something towards the death of one on the scaffold.

There is less of enlightenment, and more of mediæval prejudice and intolerance, in some other proclamations of this period, than in that by which an attempt was made to repress drunkenness. Proclamation followed proclamation against eating meat in Lent; and, though it may be true that there was some idea of keeping down prices by preventing consumption, it is certainly not less true that these prohibitions were dictated chiefly by notions of religious discipline. . . . All such restrictions as these either are, or partake of the nature of, sumptuary laws, and they have the common property of failing to attain the object towards which they are directed. Attempts to extinguish drunkenness by prohibiting the sale of liquor are of the same character; but attempts to diminish it by providing counter-attractions for persons who yield readily to temptation, are indications of a far more enlightened policy. For them James I, and even Charles I deserve credit, though their mode of action may have been unfortunate.—Vol. ii, pp. 141-144.

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#### DRUNKENNESS DURING THE COMMONWEALTH.

Among the various restraints in favour during the time of the Commonwealth may be mentioned one, of which, however, the origin was considerably earlier, upon drinking. The regulations now became somewhat more stringent than before. On the days of recreation allowed to apprentices and servants in place of the abolished Church festival-days, search was to be made in taverns and ale-houses, and any servant or apprentice drunk or disorderly, or remaining in such houses after eight o'clock in the evening, was to be apprehended and taken before a justice of the peace. It is stated in an ordinance of the year 1654 that watermen and others frequenting

wharves were "very ordinarily drunk," and the commissioners of Customs were therefore required to be very strict in enforcing the laws against drunkenness upon such persons, whom their officers were authorised to apprehend.—Vol. ii, p. 189.

#### DRUNKENNESS IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY: THE GIN ACT, &c.

Englishmen, however, seem to have been little conscious of their own progress. Self-depreciation has always been one of our national characteristics; and it would not be difficult to select writings and speeches of eminent Englishmen which are full of gloom and even of despair. Either because a new alcoholic spirit had been introduced from Holland at the time of the Revolution, and afterwards manufactured in England, or because new attention was directed to an old vice, the addiction of the populace to drunkenness led, in the ninth year of the reign of George II, to the passing of the famous Gin Act. Duties so high as to be prohibitory were placed on gin at various stages from its distillation to its sale. But never was the powerlessness of a single statute to alter the whole habits of a people more clearly shown than in the results of this law. It was altogether inoperative: the people would have their gin; and yet the duties were unpaid. A few years later the failure of the Act was practically confessed by its repeal; more moderate duties were imposed, with the hope that the dealers might find their interest in paying for licences rather than in running the risk of a prosecution, and that some check in the shape of an increased price might then be laid upon the consumers. The new Act proved more successful than its predecessor, though it failed, of course, to extirpate the breed of drunkards. The sentiments which were expressed in the debates upon these Acts are a curious monument of the time. The most intemperate language was used, and therefore the extent of the evil was probably somewhat exaggerated. Some of the speakers went even so far as to argue that unless the evil could be entirely stamped out, and without delay, the poison would in a few generations destroy the whole race of Englishmen, that there would be no gin because there would be no hands to make it, no revenue because there would be none to pay it, nothing left but the mere soil of England. . . .

Fielding's notion was that the relaxation of the ancient feudal restraints, or restraints in existence before the time of the Conquest, had caused the vices of "the great" to descend to the "very dregs of the people," by which epithet he describes "the mechanic and the labourer." They indulged, as he complained, in too frequent and

expensive diversions; hence arose drunkenness and gambling “among the vulgar”, and from drunkenness and gambling, theft and robbery. Had drunkenness, gambling, theft, and robbery first made their appearance in the eighteenth century, the argument would have deserved attentive consideration. But if any proposition in history is true, it is true that theft and robbery did not mark the eighteenth as distinguished from preceding centuries, and that the farther we look back the more numerous are the thefts and the robberies. It would be difficult to prove that there was any real increase of drunkenness in the eighteenth century; but if there was, the inevitable conclusion is that the greater the increase of drunkenness at that particular time, the less must be the influence of drunkenness in general upon crime in the aggregate. Englishmen were then most certainly not addicted to brigandage as they had been previously, and it makes little difference to Fielding’s argument whether they had been equally or less drunken in earlier ages, for in either case it is clear that he has not fixed upon a cause which in itself outweighs all other causes of crime, as both he and others have often supposed. The truth is that there is no single cause, except, perhaps, war and its consequences, the presence of which is invariably accompanied by an increase of crime, and the absence of which is invariably accompanied by a diminution of crime. Drunkenness, no doubt, bears a certain relation to some crimes, especially crimes of violence, but to many it bears the relation of effect rather than of cause. Look at what point we may of society as it existed in the eighteenth century, we see far more of the ancient traditions than of any sudden change, both in the growing civilisation and in the causes which were retarding it.—Vol. ii, pp. 335-340.

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#### RELATIONS OF PAUPERISM, DRUNKENNESS, AND CRIME.

Pauperism, it need hardly be said, is closely allied to improvidence. It is not a crime, though there are many connecting links between the pauper and the criminal. Conspicuous among these is the recklessness which leads men in time of prosperity to the gin-shop, and in time of adversity to the workhouse. Among the most remarkable curiosities of criminal statistics is the Metropolitan Police return of persons apprehended for drunkenness and disorderly conduct on the different days of the week. The day on which there are fewest apprehensions is Friday, or in other words, the day when the previous week’s wages have been exhausted, and before the new week’s wages are paid. On Saturday, or, in other words, on pay-day, there is an

increase of about forty-four per cent. above Friday's numbers. Sunday and Monday are on the average about nineteen per cent. each in excess of Friday, and the figures gradually dwindle through the rest of the week, until the ebb-tide of drink is reached on Friday again.

The inevitable inference from these facts is that a considerable number of the working classes will, under present conditions, drink to excess as long as they have the means and the opportunity. Nor can it be denied that, as wages have risen, the number of cases of alleged drunkenness brought under the notice of the police has increased more rapidly than the population. The details are even more suggestive than the general result, for they show that over a very wide area drunkenness varies inversely with pauperism—that men are most addicted to drink where money is most easily earned. In the mining districts of Northumberland, Durham, and the North and West Ridings of Yorkshire, in Monmouth, and in Glamorganshire, where paupers are few, drunkards are many, as compared with the average of England and Wales. In some of these counties labour is so well paid that the earnings of three or four days will suffice not only for support, but for debauchery until the week's end. One of the natural consequences is that where there is much temptation and no self-restraint, enjoyment is sought in its coarsest forms, and often cut short by a visit to a gaol or a police-cell. Another, though more remote, consequence is that the improvidence of youth has its Nemesis in old age, and that the patron of the gin-shop, with his wife, finds his way at last to the poor-house. The mining population could, if they were thrifty and industrious, put aside enough to support themselves when they fell sick, or were grown past work, and could rear their children without the aid of the parish. While, therefore, it is somewhat encouraging to find that the labourers who are best paid are least pauperised, it is not less discouraging to find that there still remains an unsightly mass of pauperism where there need not, from want of employment or insufficiency of pay, be any pauperism at all.—Vol. ii, pp. 424-426.

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THE ALLEGED INCREASE OF DRUNKENNESS NOT CONFIRMED BY THE  
STATISTICS OF EXCISE AND IMPORTS.

In considering the very rapid increase of drunkenness, as shown by recent judicial statistics for the whole country, a doubt arises whether there may not have been some greater strictness in apprehending persons who appeared to have been drinking. The most satisfactory way of arriving at a conclusion on this point is to compare the



judicial statistics with the returns showing the amount of inebriating drinks consumed. The figures might reasonably be expected to tally very exactly; and it might reasonably be expected that if any discrepancy existed, the consumption of the various intoxicating liquors would increase more rapidly than intoxication itself. In prosperous times very many persons, who had previously been without the means, might allow themselves a moderate indulgence, and yet not become drunk or disorderly. They would raise the figures of the import and excise lists, and would yet produce no effect upon the police lists. On the other hand, it would be impossible to raise the number of cases of drunkenness without affecting the import or excise lists, except perhaps by some concerted action among drunkards resolved to drink on each occasion just so much as would make them drunk and no more.

It is consoling to discover that the excise and import statistics, so far from showing an increase in the consumption of drink more rapid than the increase of apprehended drunkards, show a very much slower rate of progress. The most alarming and sudden rise in the police statistics was in 1872-3 as compared with 1871-2. It amounted to no less than twenty-one per cent. in a single year. But if we compare the amount of spirits, British and foreign, retained for home consumption in 1873, with the amount retained in 1872, we find a rise of less than nine per cent. If we assume that the spirits on which duty was paid in 1873 were not drunk before 1874, and carry the inquiry back a stage further, we still find a rise of less than nine per cent. in 1872 as compared with 1871. Nor is it possible to discover anywhere in the past a rise in the figures relating to spirits which at all corresponds with the alleged growth of drunkenness. The consumption of wine has increased more slowly than the consumption of spirits, and the explanation, if it can be found anywhere, can be found only in beer-drinking.

There is no more certain test of the consumption of beer than the returns of the quantity of malt retained for home consumption in each year, exclusive of the quantity used in beer made in the United Kingdom but exported. The most sudden increase under this head was in 1872, when there was a rise of more than thirteen per cent. This may well be connected with the excessive number of drunkards in 1873, which, however, it still does not sufficiently explain. The increase in the purchases of malt in 1872 as compared with 1871 amounted to but two-thirds of the increase in the cases of drunkenness and disorderly conduct brought before justices or magistrates in 1873, as

compared with 1872. It is not to be supposed that in each of these cases beer alone was the exciting cause; and if beer, wine, and spirits be classed together as the joint causes of intoxication, the increase in consumption is seen to be very much less than even in the consumption of beer considered by itself.

It should not be forgotten that the judicial statistics under consideration relate to England and Wales, the statistics of imports and excise to the whole of the United Kingdom. But the possible error from this cause is very slight, and the just conclusion to be drawn from the undeniable facts appears to be that drunkenness cannot have increased to such an extent as the judicial statistics would lead us to believe. Men cannot be drunk without drinking; and it is difficult to see how they can drink enough to make themselves drunk without a corresponding effect upon the returns of the liquor traffic. If, for example, thirty-six millions and a half of gallons of spirits will suffice to produce a crop of a hundred and fifty thousand drunken and disorderly offenders, can there be a crop of a hundred and eighty-three thousand, in a population larger by the growth of one year, without a directly proportionate increase in the number of gallons? The problem is partly physiological, partly social. There may be some natural law, as yet undiscovered, in virtue of which drunkenness increases twice as fast as the consumption of intoxicating drinks; or the action of the drinks may be cumulative, producing an increase of drunkenness at first equal to the increase in their own consumption, then equal to double the increase in consumption, and afterwards varying as the square or the cube, or in any other proportion. But in order to establish the existence of any such law as this, it would be necessary to be in possession not only, as at present, of carefully prepared returns from the police, but of a complete and perfectly accurate register of every case of drunkenness occurring in private houses or elsewhere. Until this impossible perfection of statistics can be attained, we must be content with such facts as are brought before us, and accept, though with caution, the inferences which they suggest.—Vol. ii, pp. 426-429.

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EXPLANATION TO BE SOUGHT IN THE INCREASED NUMBERS AND  
EFFICIENCY OF THE POLICE.

A suspicion that an increased activity of our police has contributed to the apparent increase of drunkenness is justified by other considerations besides the discrepancies of the returns of imports and excise. If the fact is beyond dispute that although the consumption

of spirits per head of the total population has been steadily increasing during almost the whole of the period included in the present chapter, the rate of its increase has not been commensurate with the rate of increase in detected drunkenness, there is no less certainty that the force of police and constabulary has been silently growing in numbers, and in efficiency. In the very year 1873, when there was a sudden rise of twenty-one per cent. in the number of cases of drunkenness, there was an addition of two and one-fifth per cent. both to the borough and to the county constabulary, and it was chiefly the constabulary which brought the additional offenders to justice. A rise of two per cent. in the number of constables is, of course, at first sight, wholly insufficient to account for the very much greater rise in the number of drunkards brought before magistrates. But each man of the constabulary and metropolitan police together had, in the year 1872, apprehended, on the average, five persons alleged to be drunk and disorderly. Though we may be in some doubt with respect to the number of gallons of beer or spirits required to produce a definite result in drunkenness throughout a population of more than twenty-two millions, we need not hesitate to believe that one strong healthy man could, if necessary, take not only five drunkards in a year, but five in a week, or in a day, if necessary, to a police-station. It would, therefore be mere folly to compare the actual growth of the police force with the apparent growth of drunkenness, in the hope of finding an exact agreement in the percentage. But it is obvious that different instructions might be given at different times to policemen and constables on duty, and that the men themselves might even, in process of time, learn to interpret more severely the instructions given. The total force of police and constabulary is continually increasing, not only absolutely but relatively to the population. This fact is in itself evidence of a desire to render the body vigilant and effective as a whole; and the addition to the number of drunkards taken into custody may well be the effect, to a very great extent, at least, of additional care on the part of those who take them.—Vol. ii, pp. 429-430.

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DECREASE OF DRUNKENNESS AS COMPARED WITH THE POPULATION  
IN LONDON AND LIVERPOOL.

The more the facts are studied in detail, the more is this inference confirmed. Not only the county but also the borough constabulary are and have been less numerous in proportion to the population than the police of the metropolis. In the metropolis, the persons appre-



hended as drunk and disorderly in 1873 were equal to one in every 102 of its population, but the persons so apprehended throughout the whole of England and Wales were equal to no more than one in 124. The difference is very considerable, and might at first suggest the inference that drunkenness is most prevalent and increases most rapidly in the largest towns. But our own observation and the testimony of our fathers assure us that drunken and disorderly persons are far less commonly seen in the streets than in former times, and that, apart from comparison, they are but rarely seen at all. The most remarkable fact, however, is that the number of apprehensions for drunkenness and disorderly conduct by the metropolitan police was hardly greater in 1873 than in 1850, and considerably less than in 1831, 1832, or 1833. Yet the population in 1871 had been nearly doubled since 1831; and, therefore, in proportion to the population, drunkenness had been reduced in the metropolis by one half in forty years.

Liverpool, which exceeds all other English towns but London in magnitude, has just the same tale to tell with respect to its drunkenness. The population has grown at about the same rate as that of London. In 1841 there were 17,508 persons charged with drunkenness and disorderly conduct in Liverpool, and after many fluctuations there were 18,038 in 1873. There is no doubt that, so far as reliance can be placed upon figures, the metropolis of Lancashire, as well as the metropolis of all England, shows a remarkable increase in sobriety. —Vol. ii, pp. 430, 431.

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EXPLANATION OF THE DISCREPANCY BETWEEN THE STATISTICS OF THOSE  
TWO TOWNS AND OF THE REST OF ENGLAND.

Where then is to be sought the explanation of the apparently contradictory facts that, so far as statistics are concerned, drunkenness is on the increase throughout England, that it is most prevalent in the large cities, and yet that in both of the largest cities it is, when compared with the number of inhabitants, continually decreasing? There is every reason to believe that the superior efficiency of the police causes the apparent pre-eminence of London in drunkenness, and that a change in the habits of the people has kept the drunkenness down to the level of half a century ago, while the population has doubled.

There is a point beyond which no vigilance or strictness can swell the number of persons apprehended for disorderly conduct and drunkenness. That point seems to have been reached in London

about the years 1831-1833. In smaller towns than Liverpool, and still more in the rural districts, it would be vain to seek a police organisation so perfect as in London. But as the organisation is improved and the number of the constabulary is increased, there is necessarily a nearer and nearer approach to the metropolitan model. With every gain in efficiency an approach is made towards that point beyond which it cannot be carried without oppression; and in the process there is, as an inevitable consequence, a swelling of the criminal returns, especially in minor offences.

It would not, however, be altogether consistent with facts to rely upon this one cause alone for the explanation which is sought. Drunkenness is very often the vice of an uncultivated nature exposed suddenly to temptation and well supplied with the means of self-gratification. It is, then, but the old habit of the savage feasting after the division of the spoil. Its prominence in 1873, and some previous years, is not equally marked throughout England, even if London and Liverpool be excluded from consideration. It is most conspicuous in the coal districts, and generally in the mining districts, and next to them in the towns and counties where manufacturing prosperity is of most recent development—in Durham and Lancashire among counties, in Newcastle-on-Tyne and Manchester among towns. The combination of high pay and low culture must therefore be recognised as one of the conditions of life which tend to make men drunken and disorderly. But, on the other hand, there is the greatest encouragement to be found in the history of the metropolis, which shows that evil habits may be outgrown—or, perhaps, in other words, that the extremely low culture gradually ceases to be combined with the high pay, and that as manners are softened in one direction they are softened also in another. Nor does modern London alone give reason for hope. We have but to look back a little further, to measure our progress from the eighteenth century as a starting-point, and we shall perceive at once that drunkenness in England, whatever its temporary ebbs and flows, is now as nothing when the present day is compared with the days of the Gin Act.—Vol. ii, pp. 431-433.

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#### SELF-RESTRAINT, CRIME, AND DRUNKENNESS.

Drunkenness is sometimes, no doubt, a cause of the graver crimes. It may stimulate to some deeds of violence, and send to prison a man who, had he remained sober, might have escaped reproach. When it becomes a habit, it is attended by loss of the power of application to work, and perhaps followed by poverty, which leads to temptation

and theft. But the habitual drunkard is a person deficient in will and self-restraint, and the deficiency may have existed before he became what he is. The inability to resist drink, and the inability to resist other temptations, may be, and probably are, indications of a disposition which is not created by alcohol, though an excessive consumption of alcohol may increase its weaknesses. Drunkenness, is in fact, according to a familiar illustration, not the disease, but one out of many symptoms of a disease.—Vol. ii, p. 433.

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#### OBJECTIONS TO LEGISLATIVE INTERFERENCE IN MATTERS OF DIET.

If it is true that the general tone of society must be affected before there can be any perceptible diminution in the greater crimes, it is not less true that the minor offences vary with the surrounding conditions. Drunkenness and disorderly conduct give rise to the greatest number of charges brought under summary jurisdiction. But, as has already been shown, drunkenness itself varies inversely with pauperism, and any given day of the week produces fewer cases of drunkenness in proportion as it is more distant from the day on which workmen receive their wages. For similar reasons, there is commonly an increase in the number of summary convictions for minor offences, with a corresponding decrease of commitments for theft and still graver offences, during times of prosperity, and a decrease in the number of summary convictions, with a corresponding increase of commitments for theft and graver offences, during times of adversity. A man to whom there are offered few opportunities of physical recreation, and who would find some difficulty in gratifying a taste for art of any kind or for literature, even if he possessed it, is sorely tempted to spend his superfluous earnings in drinking to excess. There cannot be a doubt that all those persons who are striving their utmost to save their weaker brethren from this temptation are true philanthropists. But it may, perhaps, be doubted whether the manner in which they attempt to gain their end is always to be commended.

No one who has any knowledge of human nature—no one, certainly, who has studied the history of the past—will suppose that men can be made sober by repressive measures alone. In Scotland, the houses in which drink is sold are closed throughout one day in seven; but, nevertheless, the cases of drunkenness brought under the notice of the police are, in proportion to the population, far greater than in England, where such houses are, at stated hours, open every day in the week. Forbid men to buy drink openly, and they will buy it secretly; forbid native manufacture of drink, and importation will

become the substitute; forbid importation, and the smuggler will regain his popularity; destroy the smuggler, and each household will supply its own wants by its own brewhouse or its own still. The maxim that the law has no concern with trifles may well be extended; the law becomes tyrannous when it prescribes what shall be eaten and what shall be drunk; all such interference is a relapse towards the barbarism of the Middle Ages, when our forefathers were punished for selling their wares at their own price, and for eating meat in Lent.

Though, however, it is but human to resent any legislative dictation with respect to meat and drink, and though mankind has everywhere been habituated to some kind of intoxicating liquor since the time when Bacchus was worshipped in Greece and Italy, or wine was known to make glad the heart of man in ancient Judea, it would be a contradiction of all experience to deny that there is a very close connexion between drunkenness and some forms of crime. Violence so often follows excessive drinking, the wife beaten by her husband when he is drunk so often testifies to his good conduct when he is sober, that there appear at first sight to be good reasons for withholding the cup from the hand which it may cause to shed blood. But to prohibit or to restrict the sale of spirits, wine, and beer, because they have a maddening effect upon some particular persons, would be no more rational than to clothe the British army in uniform of a different colour because scarlet has an irritating effect upon bulls. Criminals are but a small portion of the whole population, and they have not all fallen into crime through drink. It would be unjust, if not absurd, to pass a sumptuary law affecting more than twenty millions of human beings in order that a few thousands might have temptation removed out of their way. Nor, although assaults and even murder are committed in moments of drunkenness, does it by any means follow that such offences would be greatly diminished in number, could even total abstinence from all fermented liquors be enforced. The drunkard is wanting in self-control; and his drunkenness is at least as much a result of his natural disposition as a cause of his lawless actions. He cannot, more than once in his life, plead ignorance of the effects of alcohol in extenuation of his misdeeds. If he is not sufficiently master of himself to refrain from destroying his own senses when opportunity offers, it may be doubted whether he is sufficiently master of himself to refrain from inflicting blows when he has received but slight provocation or no provocation at all. The recklessness with which he betakes himself to the alehouse or the gin-shop necessarily precedes the misconduct of which he is guilty a few hours after-

wards. To assume that his nature could be changed by depriving him of one particular mode of gratification, is to assume that which could be proved only by a long series of experiments.—Vol. ii, pp. 584-587.

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DRUNKENNESS HAS BEEN, AND MAY BE, DIMINISHED NOT BY LEGISLATIVE RESTRICTIONS, BUT BY OTHER CAUSES.

The teaching of history is, on the contrary, opposed to all interference by the State with the liberty of the individual, except where his conduct may injure his neighbours. It also tells us very plainly that drunkenness is in no way necessarily associated with free access to drink. A few generations ago, when there were no clubs in the modern sense of the term, men in the position of gentlemen were in the habit of making themselves drunk, and congratulated each other upon the number of bottles emptied. In our time, when men of the same, and of far lower positions, have every temptation offered to them in the form of wine from every country, drunkenness is almost unknown in any except the lowest classes, and would be followed by expulsion from any respectable club.

It may, therefore, be safely inferred not only that direct legislation against the sale of intoxicating drinks on any day of the week is unnecessary, but that it would not be the most effectual means of attaining the desired end. There are two ways of diminishing temptation, the one by removing the thing which tempts, the other by training the persons who might be tempted. It is by the latter process rather than the former that the greatest social changes have been effected. It might have been argued at the dawn of modern civilisation, that all private property was a temptation to theft, and ought, therefore, to be abolished. It might also have been argued that the existence of other human beings was a temptation to each particular human being to commit murder, and therefore that the sooner the whole human race was destroyed the better. In this form the absurdity of the argument is sufficiently apparent: but the argument is precisely the same whether it be applied to the desire to drink, the desire to take that which belongs to another, or the desire to destroy human life. If the means of gratification are taken away, it is, no doubt, true that the desire cannot be gratified. But the history of the past shows that there is no need to punish all mankind in order that the minority which is wanting in self-restraint may be well-behaved. Population has been multiplied many-fold, and yet murder has become less frequent. Property has increased beyond all



calculation, and it has become more secure as it has grown. Drunkenness and drunken brawls, once common to every class, are now almost restricted to the class in which the tastes are most coarse and which enjoys the least variety in the choice of alcoholic drinks offered to it.

The arts, the sciences, literature, opportunities for innocent recreation, have contributed not a little to soften manners in some ranks of life ; they may safely be trusted to do their own work in a lower grade, if only they can reach it. But that kind of legislation which is merely prohibitory, and which must necessarily be felt as a hardship, can never be effectual against drunkenness. To shut the ale-house door abruptly in the workman's face is not to make him love the laws under which he lives—especially if he finds that his search for harmless occupation or amusement elsewhere, in his leisure moments, is equally discouraged. When there is no interference with the natural course of events, variety in the modes of spending time—both in earning a livelihood, and in the pursuit of pleasure—will keep pace with the diffusion of culture. But there may be some danger from the fanaticism of enthusiasts who are not aware that the most lawless period in the history of England was in the days before spirituous liquors had been introduced. The injury inflicted by a drunken person is neither greater nor less than the same injury inflicted by one who is sober. The punishment or mode of prevention ought to be the same in either case ; and the particular individual who has a tendency to drunkenness could be taught some of its disadvantages by suffering for a more specific and tangible offence. But if the mere act of drinking to excess, without the infliction of any injury upon other persons, is so very heinous as it is sometimes represented to be, it might, perhaps, be checked by a higher fine than is now commonly imposed, and by exacting bail for the future good behaviour of all who are convicted.—Vol. ii, pp. 587-589.

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*The evidence for these and other statements and inferences is shown in the Appendices at the end of each volume of the History.*













